

# **West Nile Educational Summit**

## **Meeting Notes**

**03/10/04**

### **Summary:**

This summit was designed to initiate brainstorming into identifying community partners and behavior changing messages for the upcoming WNV season. The target audience was health educators who were experienced in developing messages targeting behavior change as well as identifying possible community partners in ethnic populations. The brainstorming session generated many possible messages and target populations. Shortly, a smaller group composed of representatives from state and local health departments will evaluate these messages for inclusion in this year's campaign.

### **Introduction:**

Emily Zielinski-Gutierrez, Ph.D., is a CDC behavioral scientist. Dr. Zielinski-Gutierrez spoke on:

1. Theories of behavior change
2. Results of surveys in other areas of the US identifying current behaviors

Her slides can be seen in the accompanying Powerpoint file.

Some of the key information points that came out of her talk:

- a. While WNV can affect people between the ages of 1 month and 99 years, the majority of morbidity and mortality occurs in those over the age of 40, with 55 years being the median age of infection. Less than 1% of cases occur in children under the age of 15.
- b. DEET is underused. Only about 40% of households have DEET, and of those, only about 50% of the households indicate using it. That would mean that at most 20% of individuals use DEET, despite educational campaigns.
- c. DEET use increases with socioeconomic status. This is a problem in that people in lower socioeconomic status tend not to have air conditioning, thus spend more time outdoors, don't have screens on doors/windows, etc.
- d. Recommendations for kids is not uniform. Ensure that we have one uniform message on appropriate levels and how often to apply.
- e. Fear-oriented messages backfired.
- f. Learn from the Avon ladies. Community-based information dissemination.

### **Brainstorming A:**

The meeting broke up into 4 small workgroups that were tasked to discuss messages that would work towards changing behavior as well as to discuss the efficacy of the "prevention begins at home" poster.

### **Possible Poster Changes:**

- Poster is a good "check-list," but needs to incorporate an incentive for homeowners to take **action** to use it as such.

- Set it up as a check list
- Swamp + water around the house = mosquitoes
- Keep water fresh? What does this mean? How often?
- Determine the focus population – urban or rural?
- Exactly what actions do we wish people to take? Perhaps put the poster on the website and use the icons as links to additional information?
- Color – needs an updated color. Perhaps use blue to represent water?
- Include a personal protection message in it.
- Use less text and more action steps
- Add information on:
  - How to dispose of tires
  - Screen placement and repair
- Perhaps target the messages on the poster to location:
  - Household messages (place on tearoff sheets at Home Depots/hardware stores)
  - Animal messages (place on tearoff sheets at IFA, horse stores)
  - Personal messages (place on tearoff sheets at sites that sell bug spray/repellents)
- Need to have a message for homeowners with “boggy” areas in their yard
- Make the actions in this flyer “doable”. Don’t say “get rid of tires”, have a “tire amnesty day”. Don’t say “clean garden ponds”, say how to clean a garden pond.
- Get entomological input to determine the major sources of mosquito breeding...is it 99% on public lands and 1% at home?

### **Possible Messages:**

- Hype from last year has created problem fatigue
- Don’t want to tell people to use DEET every time they go out (possible overuse?)
- How do you get people to **buy** DEET?
  - Got DEET?
  - Be Offensive (the best defense is a good offense)
  - Product placement
  - Address the barriers
- How do you get people to **use** DEET?
  - Put it by the door
  - Put it in backpacks
  - Reduce barriers of smell, feel, fear of chemicals, etc.
  - Clarify DEET use message (compare DEET percent to SPF factor?, how often to reapply?)
  - Increase availability (more places to buy, more sizes to buy, more options)
- Product placement efforts:
  - Encourage local outdoor events to provide bug spray
  - Reach recreational groups
  - Ensure retailers stock towelettes and “purse sized” options
- Identify other products that work well (web page? bug zappers? pest strips?)
- Dead bird message?

- Medical community messages?
- People over 65 respond to safety messages: “Mosquitoes as invaders of your safety”. Tie in with protecting home, tie in with safety, don’t always see them, don’t see bug bites.
- When are people at risk?
- Spokesperson with illness from last year?
- How do you protect people at risk?
- Motivate people through emotion
  - Find the emotion that pushes their button
- Can we determine a “mosquito index” similar to a UV index, where time of year and weather give us a green mosquito day versus a red mosquito day (to assist people in determining optimal times to use DEET)
- Believe that there are two main message groups
  - Active, outdoor
  - More sedentary backyard
  - Don’t want to stratify by age, because we can have 60 year old hikers and 40 year olds sitting on rockers.

### **Community Efforts:**

- Retail
  - Product (DEET) placement
  - Have purse sized and towelettes available for purchase
  - Big box retailers (K-mart, Target, Walmart)
  - Specialty retailers (REI, Kirkhams, Sportsman’s warehouse, Camping world)
- Grassroots educational efforts
- Church groups
  - Have religious leaders spread the word
  - Presiding bishopric
  - Catholic diocese
- Ethnic groups
- Elected officials
- People over 65
  - AARP
  - Senior day care and residential centers
  - Retirement communities
- Rotary
- USU extension
- Poison Control
- Schools
  - PTA
  - Universities
  - Day care
  - Utah High School Sports Association (possibly change scheduling?)
- Scouts (fund raisers?)

- Special projects such as distributing repellent or eliminating standing water?
- Special interest groups
  - Veterinarians
  - Farmers
  - Horse owners
  - Sports clubs (tennis, golf, cycling, etc)
    - SL Marathon??
  - Local utilities (tie in with reduced water usage?)
- Businesses with possible impact (partner with them early in the season to have them understand the value of presenting a positive protective message)
  - Parks and recreational areas
    - State and national parks
    - County and City parks
  - Amusement parks (eg. Lagoon, miniature golf, etc)
  - Golf courses
  - Outdoor concert venues
  - Sports (eg Stingers)
  - Outdoor retailers (including Target, Walmart, etc)
  - Camps (scout, Kostopoulos, etc.)
  - Private campgrounds
- WNV week
- 4<sup>th</sup> July, 24<sup>th</sup> July holiday event organizers

## **Brainstorming B:**

The 4 small workgroups were reformed and asked to identify specific target audiences and possible messages for those audiences.

## **Possible Audiences:**

- Non-english speaking (translation, engage community leaders for these populations)
  - Hispanic
    - radio
    - Mexican restaurants
    - Catholic church
    - Western Union
    - WIC
    - Specialty grocery stores
    - Hispanic media
    - Barriers: language, suspicion of government, access
  - Pacific Islander/SE asian
    - Churches
    - Ethnic stores
  - Native American
    - Tribal council
    - Indian walk-in center

- VIPS
  - CERT
  - WIC
- Refugee center
- Rural (address irrigation, geography, low density population)
  - Community events
  - Radio/paper
  - Barriers: government suspicion, “I’m not at risk”
- Low socioeconomic status, including homeless (need to distribute bug spray)
  - Salvation Army
  - Shelters
  - WIC
  - Find groups to sponsor and distribute permethrin rather than bug spray to homeless population
  - Barriers: cost, access, priority, fear, knowledge of risk
- Laborers
- People over 65 (use large print, diffuse myths, address economic factors)
  - U of U website
  - AARP

**Action steps:**

- Create presentations targeting specific groups
- Identify resources for the public